

“Crypto” (krip-TOE)

Protection Against Recreational Water Illnesses (RWIs)

What is Crypto?

Crypto is a germ that causes diarrhea. Crypto, short for *Cryptosporidium*, is found in infected people’s stool and cannot be seen by the naked eye. This germ is protected by an outer shell that allows it to survive for long periods of time and makes it resistant to chlorine disinfection found in pools.



Why should I be concerned about Crypto?

During the past two decades, Crypto has become recognized as one of the most common causes of recreational water illness in the United States. The germ is found in every part of the United States and the world.

How is Crypto spread?

Crypto is not spread by contact with blood. Crypto can be spread by:

- Swallowing recreational water contaminated with Crypto. Recreational water is water from swimming pools, hot tubs, jacuzzis, fountains, lakes, rivers, springs, ponds, or streams that can be contaminated with sewage or feces from humans or animals.
- Putting something in your mouth or accidentally swallowing something that has come in contact with the stool of a person or animal infected with Crypto.
- Swallowing Crypto picked up from surfaces (such as lounge chairs, picnic tables, bathroom fixtures, changing tables) contaminated with stool from an infected person.

How do I protect myself and my family?

Healthy Swimming behaviors are needed to protect you and your kids from recreational water illnesses (RWIs) and will help stop germs from getting in the pool in the first place. Here are six “P-L-E-As” that promote Healthy Swimming:

1. **PLEASE** don’t swim when you have diarrhea.
2. **PLEASE** don’t swallow the pool water.
3. **PLEASE** wash your hands with soap and water after using the toilet or after changing diapers.
4. **PLEASE** take your child on bathroom breaks often.
5. **PLEASE** change diapers in a bathroom and not at poolside.
6. **PLEASE** wash your child thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water before swimming.

For further information, visit www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/cryptofacts.